

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Colorado River Valley Field Office
2300 River Frontage Road
Silt, Colorado 81652**

PROJECT PROPOSAL

NUMBER

DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2015-0017-EA

CASEFILE NUMBER

COC76833, COC76833T, and COC76837

PROJECT NAME

Winter Flats Pipeline

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Red Rock Gathering Company, LLC (RRG), a subsidiary of Summit Midstream Partners (Summit), is proposing to construct approximately 21.9 miles of varying-sized buried steel natural gas pipelines, and a collocated 10.8-mile water pipeline along the Winter Flats alignment. Included in the total pipeline mileage, RRG is also proposing to construct a 1.3-mile buried steel natural gas pipeline and collocated water pipeline to the Black Hill Plateau Production (BHPP) Wagon Track 12-16 pad location (the Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral). The construction and operation of the 21.9 miles of varying-sized natural gas and water pipelines is collectively called the Winter Flats Pipeline Project.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project is located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands in Mesa County, Colorado, within the boundaries of the BLM Grand Junction Field Office (GJFO). The Project area is located generally west of the Town of De Beque and is topographically located to the south of and parallel to South Shale Ridge. The proposed Winter Flats Pipeline route would start at BHPP's Winter Flats 1-2-100 natural gas well pad and would terminate at RRG's De Beque Processing Plant.

The legal description for the Project (all in the Sixth Principal Meridian) is as follows:

Township 9 South, Range 100 West, Sections 2 and 11-12;
Township 9 South, Range 99 West, Sections 7-12;
Township 9 South, Range 98 West, Sections 1-4, 7-9, and 11-12;
Township 8 South, Range 98 West, Section 36;
Township 8 South, Range 97 West, Sections 29 and 31-32.

The Project area is within the De Beque, Wagon Track Ridge, Winter Flats, and Corcoran Peak U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles and is shown on the Proposed Action Location Map on the following page (**Figure 1**).

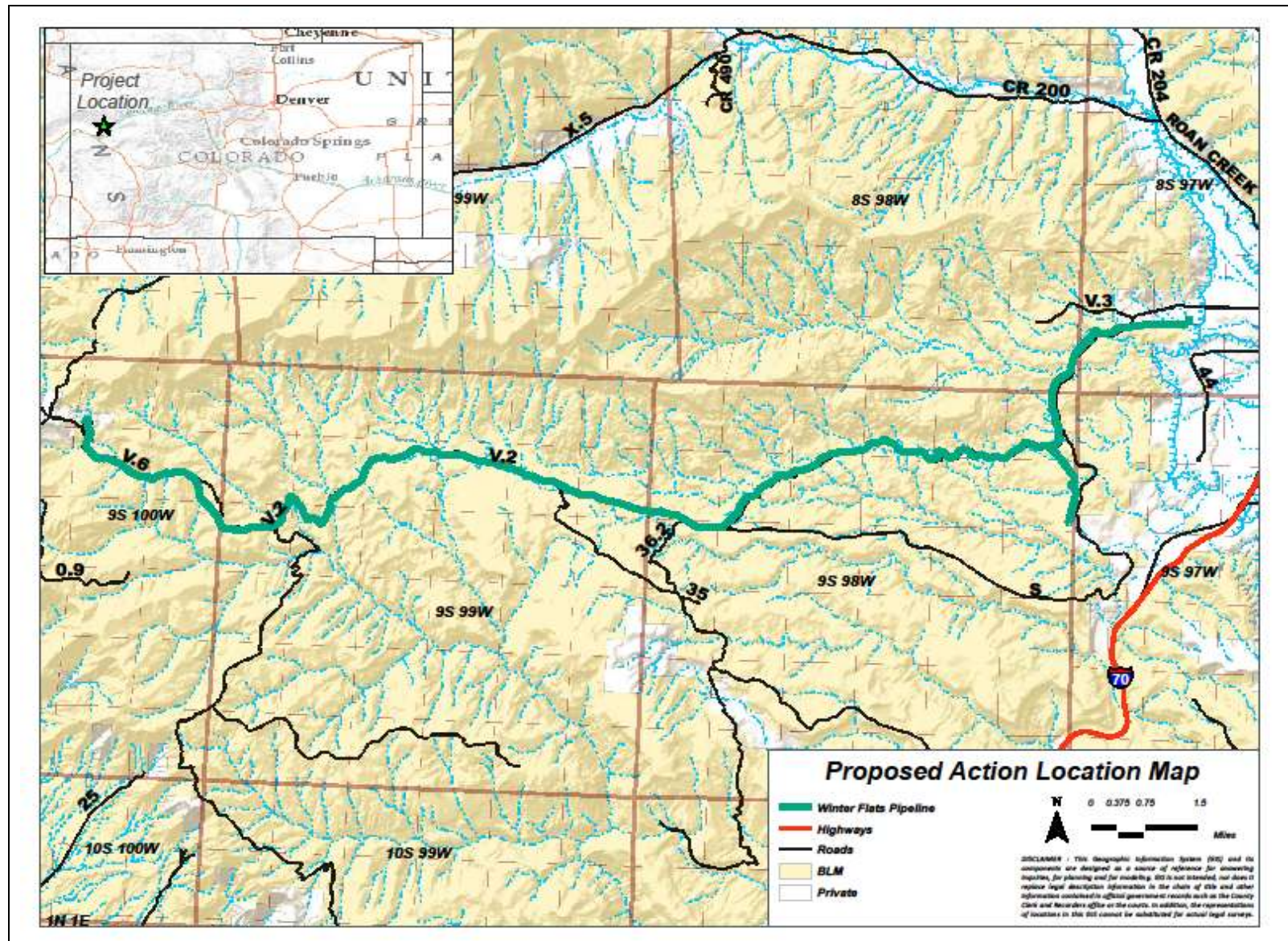


Figure 1. Proposed Action Project Location Map

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this EA is to respond to a proposal from RRG for issuance of BLM Right-of-Way grants and a temporary use permit to authorize construction and operation of natural gas and water pipelines to assist BHPP in developing its Federal oil and gas leases in the Winter Flats and Whittaker Units. The proposed gas gathering pipeline would be used to transport natural gas and associated constituents to RRG's De Beque Gas Processing Plant at 4325 V2/10 Road in Section 29, Township 8 South, Range 97 West. The water pipelines would be used to transport water to BHPP's well locations for use in drilling and well completions (hydraulic fracturing) operations and to transport produced water from the oil and gas wells to BHPP's existing water handling facility adjacent to RRG's De Beque Gas Processing Plant. The natural gas pipeline would ultimately deliver natural gas to BHPP wells to regional and national markets for the use and benefit of the public. The water pipelines would allow the delivery of fresh water and produced water without relying on the use of heavy haul trucks.

INTRODUCTION

RRG is a midstream gas gathering and processing company in the Piceance Basin. Although the Project area lies within the administrative boundaries of the BLM's GJFO, it is being managed by BLM's Colorado River Valley Field Office (CRVFO) in Silt, Colorado. This change in BLM management of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this Project is part of a consolidation in Colorado BLM's Northwest District.

PROPOSED ACTION

RRG is proposing to construct approximately 9.8 miles of 16-inch diameter and 10.8 miles of 12-inch diameter buried steel natural gas pipelines. RRG is also proposing to construct an additional 1.3 miles of 8-inch diameter buried steel natural gas pipeline called the Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral. The Project would have a total of 21.9 miles of new natural gas pipelines and related aboveground facilities. In addition to the natural gas pipelines, RRG is proposing to construct approximately 10.8 miles of 12-inch diameter steel water pipeline collocated with the 12-inch natural gas pipeline and 1.3 miles of 8-inch diameter water pipeline along the Wagon Track Lateral. RRG would also re-purpose an existing 9.8 miles of an existing 8-inch steel natural gas pipeline to be a water pipeline collocated with the 16-inch Winter Flats pipeline. The proposed Winter Flats pipeline corridor generally follows RRG's existing 6- and 8-inch natural gas pipelines, which were constructed in the early 1980s and are now operated by RRG. The Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral would be a new pipeline, originating at the BHPP Wagon Track 12-16 pad and tying into the Winter Flats Pipeline. The proposed Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral does not follow any existing pipeline rights-of-way (ROWs).

This Project is being coordinated with BHPP, and the collocated 10.8-mile, 12-inch water line would be under the initial ownership of BHPP. Water and natural gas pipelines would be installed at the same time by RRG, requiring a 75-foot construction ROW. RRG is in the process of submitting an Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands to the BLM GJFO, requesting authorization to construct, operate, and maintain these natural gas pipelines and related facilities on public lands. RRG is requesting a 30-foot wide permanent ROW on BLM-administered lands and is requesting the ROW grant for a term of 30 years. RRG is requesting a 45-foot-wide temporary use permit for 3 years for the construction and reclamation process, for a total construction corridor of 75 feet in width. BHPP would be requesting their own individual ROW grant for the 12-inch water line.

RRG has identified four areas containing sensitive resources, specifically presence Colorado hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*) and cultural resources. RRG would avoid potential disturbance to these features by using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) or boring to cross these areas during construction.

The areas that would be crossed by boring or HDD include approximately 2,980 feet along the pipeline alignment. A typical HDD profile and a schematic of a typical layout are included in Appendix B.

Project Components

The proposed Winter Flats pipeline route would start at BHPP's existing Winter Flats 1-2-100 natural gas well pad site and end at RRG's existing De Beque Processing Plant, extending through BLM lands in the GJFO in Mesa County, Colorado. The existing ROW (constructed in the early 1980s) is reclaimed, is difficult to find in many areas, and past surface disturbance appears to be around 50-60 feet in width. Additional surface disturbance would include nine temporary storage yards, and 41 temporary extra workspaces (EWSs) to facilitate construction of the pipelines. Generally the size of the storage yards range from 100 by 100 feet to 250 by 250 feet. The EWSs are generally 15-foot extensions from the construction corridor, and extend around 100-foot running parallel to the construction corridor for crossing drainages and steeper, rocky areas. Two new aboveground valve yards would be 100 by 100 feet and 50 by 50 feet in area. Valve Yard 1 (the larger site) would be located where the proposed 12-inch gas pipeline and 12-inch water line would be resized to the proposed 16-inch gas pipeline and existing 8-inch water line. Valve Yard 2 would be located at the Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral tie-in. RRG would reclaim a portion of the surface disturbance of these valve yards; the final surface area being reduced for long-term operations.

Construction of the Project is anticipated to begin in fall 2015, pending completion of this analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), issuance of a section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Anticipated duration of the construction would be approximately 9 to 12 months. Site reclamation would occur after completion of pipeline installation and is anticipated to be completed prior to winter of 2016-2017. The pipeline would be operated on a year-round basis by RRG.

General Considerations

Preconstruction surveys and literature reviews were conducted to identify sensitive resources along the Project route. Resources to be identified included: sensitive wildlife (e.g., mule deer, elk, and raptor) populations and habitat; sensitive plant populations; wetlands and Waters of the U.S., and cultural and paleontological resources. Mitigation measures intended to avoid and minimize impacts are provided in environmental compliance plans to be determined during the development of this EA, and through modification of the pipeline routes to avoid impacts.

If construction activities occur during the spring months, pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors and migratory birds would be conducted along the construction workspace. The field survey results would be used to identify sensitive resource construction buffer areas and areas requiring special protective signs, flagging, or fencing.

Civil surveys would be performed to identify the centerline of the pipeline and the boundaries of both sides of the approved workspace before construction activities commence. Flagged or painted lath would be set at intervals required to maintain line of sight along the proposed centerline and at the edges of the work limits. All EWSs would be marked in a similar fashion and all four corners of each EWS would be marked by flagged or painted lath. RRG's construction inspectors would be responsible for verifying that the limits of authorized construction work areas are staked prior to construction. Access to the ROW and construction areas would be from V2/10 Road and S Road.

Clearing, Grading, and Top Soiling

Vegetation would be cleared and the construction workspace graded to provide for safe and efficient operation of construction equipment and vehicles, and to provide space for the storage of subsoil and topsoil. Construction activity and ground disturbance would be limited to approved, staked areas.

Trees would be cut with a chain saw and/or mechanical shears and brush would generally be cut with a hydro-axe or similar equipment. Trees and brush would be cut as close to the ground as possible. Vegetation would typically be chipped or shredded and incorporated into the topsoil. Stumps that are not shredded or chipped and incorporated into the topsoil would be removed and disposed of at an approved disposal facility.

Topsoil would be salvaged where required by the BLM and landowners, and RRG would protect topsoil along the pipeline route to facilitate revegetation of the construction workspace after construction is complete.

All available topsoil, up to a depth of 6 inches (if available), would be removed from the trench line and working side of the workspace. Topsoil would be stockpiled separate from subsoil and would not be used to pad the trench or construct trench breakers. Dry drainages or washes that cross the construction workspace would not be blocked with topsoil or subsoil piles. Topsoil and subsoil would be placed outside of the ordinary high water marks of drainages. Gaps would be left periodically in the windrowed topsoil and subsoil to avoid ponding and excess diversion of natural runoff during storm events.

Trenching and Blasting

Access would be provided for landowners and grazing permittees to move vehicles, equipment, and livestock across the trench where necessary. RRG would contact livestock operators and provide adequate crossing facilities as needed to ensure livestock are not prevented from reaching water sources due to the open trench.

RRG and their Contractors would keep wildlife and livestock trails open and passable by adding soft plugs (areas where the trench is excavated and replaced with minimal compaction) during the construction phase. Soft plugs with ramps on either side would be left at all well-defined livestock and wildlife trails to allow access across the trench and provide a means of escape for livestock and wildlife that may fall into the trench.

No blasting is expected on BLM lands. Crews would utilize rock-saws to excavate through rock where rock formations are encountered during construction.

Pipe Installation

The joints of pipe would be strung along the ditch and welded together. When necessary, pipe would be bent to accommodate horizontal and vertical changes in direction. Pipe joints would be lined up end-to-end, clamped into position, and welded in accordance with regulations and standards currently required for natural gas pipelines or water lines, as applicable. All welds would be visually inspected by a qualified inspector. Non-destructive radiographic inspection methods would be conducted in accordance with current requirements. A specialized contractor would be employed to perform this work. Any defects would be repaired or cut out as required under the specified regulations and standards.

To prevent corrosion, the pipe would be externally coated with fusion bonded epoxy coating prior to delivery. After welding, field joints would be coated with a tape wrap, shrinkable sleeve wrap, or field-

applied fusion bond epoxy. Before the pipe is lowered into the ditch, the pipeline coating would be visually inspected and tested with an electronic detector, and any faults or scratches would be repaired.

Lowering-in and Padding Pipeline

Before the pipe section is lowered into the ditch an inspection would be conducted to verify that the pipe is properly fitted and installed in the ditch, minimum cover is provided, and the trench bottom is free of rocks and other De Bris that could damage the external pipe coating. Dewatering may be necessary where water has accumulated in the trench. The pipe sections would be simultaneously lifted in position over the ditch and lowered in place. Sifted soil fines from the excavated subsoils would provide rock-free pipeline padding and bedding. Sandbags may be used to pad the bottom of the ditch instead of, or in combination with, padding with soil fines. In rocky areas, padding material or a rock shield would be used to protect the pipe. Topsoil would not be used to pad the pipe.

Backfilling Pipeline

Backfilling would begin after a section of pipe has been successfully placed in the ditch. Backfill would be conducted using a bulldozer or other suitable equipment. Backfilling the trench would generally use the subsoil previously excavated from the trench, except in rocky areas where imported, appropriate fill material may be needed. Backfill would be graded and compacted, where necessary for ground stability, by tamping or walking with a wheeled or tracked vehicle. Compaction would be performed to the extent that there are no voids in the trench. Any excavated materials or materials unfit for backfill would either be utilized elsewhere, shallowly mounded on the trench (to help avoid settling issues) or properly disposed of in conformance with applicable laws or regulations.

Hydrostatic Pipeline Testing

The pipeline would be tested in compliance with necessary regulations. Prior to filling the pipeline for a hydrostatic or pneumatic test, each section of the pipeline would be cleaned by passing reinforced poly pigs through the interior of the line. Incremental segments of the pipeline would then be filled with water, compressed air or nitrogen, pressurized, and held for the duration of the test. The length of each segment tested would depend on topography. Water for hydrostatic testing would be acquired from the Town of De Beque.

Cleanup and Restoration

Cleanup and restoration would occur after the pipeline is installed and after backfill activities are completed. Cleanup of the surface along the construction workspace and any EWSs would include removing any construction De Bris and final grading the areas to the finished contour. Erosion control measures would be installed and seeding would be performed in accordance with fee-landowner and BLM requirements.

RRG would employ drill or broadcast seed methods to ensure proper seed placement. Drill seeding is preferred and would be used wherever soil characteristics and slope allow effective operation of a rangeland seed drill. Drill seeding would be performed perpendicular to the slope; seed would be placed in direct contact with the soil at an average depth of 0.5-inches, covered with soil, and firmed to eliminate air pockets around the seeds. Broadcast seeding would be employed in areas where drill seeding is unsafe or physically impossible. Seed would be applied uniformly over disturbed areas with manually operated cyclone-bucket spreaders, mechanical spreaders, or blowers. Broadcast application rates would be twice that of drill rates. The seed would be uniformly raked, chained, dragged, or cultipacked to incorporate seed to a sufficient seeding depth.

All irrigation ditches, cattle guards, fences, and artificial and natural livestock and wildlife water sources would be repaired to at least preconstruction conditions.

Livestock Barrier and Other Livestock Issues

RRG, in conjunction with BHPP, would provide compensation or interim measures for any critical facilities (such as watering sites) disrupted during the construction or restoration process through prior agreements with the BLM, grazing permittees or landowners. Temporary fencing would be installed as required by pre-construction agreements with landowners to prevent livestock entry into the construction workspace. Livestock crossovers (trench plugs), with ramps on either side of the open trench, would be utilized at maximum 1-mile intervals and at well-defined livestock and wildlife trails to facilitate passage of livestock across the construction workspace and to prevent livestock from becoming trapped in the trench.

Summary of Proposed Project Disturbance

Pipeline ROW

Table 1 summarizes the acreage of disturbance (temporary and permanent) for the proposed Project.

Table 1. Disturbance Associated with Pipeline Construction and Ancillary Facilities

<i>Proposed Action Components</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>		<i>Long-Term</i>
	<i>Miles</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Valve Yards</i>
Winter Flats Pipeline			
12-inch Natural Gas and Water Pipelines	10.8	98.9	-
16-inch Natural Gas Pipeline	9.8	89.3	-
Valve Yards (2)	-	0.3	0.3
Valve Sets (7)	-	0.04	-
Storage Yards (9)	-	8.2	-
Extra Work Spaces (41)	-	4.8	-
Subtotal	20.6	201.5	-
Wagon Track 12-16 Lateral			
8-inch Natural Gas and Water Pipelines	1.3	11.4	-
Subtotal	1.3	11.4	-
Project Total	21.9 miles	212.9 acres	0.3 acres

The proposed temporary construction corridor would be approximately 75-feet wide and the permanent ROW for the pipeline after construction is complete would be 30-feet wide. The pipeline would cross approximately 21.4 miles of BLM lands and 0.5 mile of private lands. An open trench approximately 48-inches wide and 5-feet deep would be dug using either a track hoe or trenching machine, and RRG would install the natural gas and produced water lines as described in the Proposed Action. The natural gas pipeline and the water line would be constructed and laid in place in the trench with the water line placed approximately 12 inches from the natural gas pipeline.

The pipelines would be constructed and tested in accordance with established best management practices (BMPs) and industry standards. RRG would be responsible for construction of both lines. The maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) for the gas pipeline would be 1,440 pounds per square inch (psi) and the MAOP for the produced water line would be 1,000 psi. The trench would be backfilled and the

surface recontoured as near as practical to preconstruction conditions and reclaimed using BLM recommended seed mix. The proposed pipeline has been sized to accommodate BHPP's current and future estimated gas production.

Temporary EWSs and Storage Yards

Temporary EWSs would be required for construction workspace along the ROW and would be used to store pipe, construction equipment, and materials. There would be 41 EWSs utilized for the Project; these EWSs are illustrated on the Proposed Action Overview Maps (Tile 1-14) included in Appendix A. In addition to the 41 EWSs, RRG would also use nine additional temporary storage yards along the project ROW for staging and equipment storage. These storage yards are also illustrated on the Proposed Action Overview Maps (Tiles 1-14) in Appendix A.

Aboveground Appurtenances

Pipeline markers would be placed along the pipeline route as necessary in accordance with safety requirements. Aboveground valve sets to accommodate future well pad tie-in locations, mainline valve sets to allow the pipeline to be segregated into sections for future maintenance, and pig launcher/receivers would be required on BLM lands. All natural gas volume measurement would occur at the well pad locations and at the two valve yards, described below.

Permanent aboveground appurtenances at the two valve yard sites would include exposed aboveground sections of pipe, valves, pig launchers and receivers, and small (5-foot by 5-foot) sheds containing natural gas measuring equipment. Small containers would also be onsite to help catch fluids from pigging operations. Valve yard sites are adjacent to the existing roadways to facilitate vehicle access during normal operations; steel guard posts/poles would be installed to protect facilities from vehicles. During valve yard construction, approximately 50 by 50-foot and 100 by 100-foot areas respectively would be temporarily disturbed. Valve yard areas would be mostly reclaimed and revegetated with some permanently graveled areas remaining to facilitate access and operations. The graveled areas would be kept free of vegetation to reduce the risk of wildfire. The two valve yards would comprise approximately 0.3 acres of graveled long-term disturbance. All aboveground facilities and appurtenances would be painted to BLM specifications to reduce visual impacts. If livestock or unauthorized public access to valve yards becomes an issue, fencing may be installed to keep livestock out and discourage public access to these sites.

ALTERNATIVES

Actions Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail

RRG and the BLM initially considered an alignment similar to that of the Proposed Action but following along its entire length an existing pipeline corridor constructed in the early 1980s. This route would have allowed more use of previously disturbed areas and reduced the overall pipeline length. However, this alternative was not carried forward in the NEPA analysis because it would have included long sections of ROW within the South Shale Ridge Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) included in GJFO's Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP), expected to be made final before completion of this EA and initiation of the Project.

No Action Alternative

Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations require the BLM to analyze the No Action Alternative in comparison to the Proposed Action. In this case, the No Action Alternative would consist

of denial by the BLM of the ROW application submitted by RRG for use of Federal land. Consequently, construction of the pipeline would not occur on BLM land under this alternative. Because no alternative non-Federal alignment has been identified by RRG, such an alignment is speculative, and this EA therefore assumes that the No Action Alternative would constitute abandonment of the Project as proposed.